RAJYA SABHA

Tuesday, the 11th March, 2008/21 Phalguna, 1929 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 161. ...*(Interruptions)*... Question 161, please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Sir, Question No. 161, ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, in Hyderabad, the CPI(M) Office has been attacked by the BJP workers ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have discussed this matter ...*(Interruptions)*... Just one minute, please ...*(Interruptions)*... Just a minute, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... Just a minute, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please resume your places. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please let the Question Hour proceed. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please listen to the Chair. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please listen to the Chair. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please. ...*(Interruptions)*... We have discussed this matter in the morning meeting. After the Question Hour, you will get an opportunity. Thank you. Question No. 161.

पर्यटकों के विरुद्ध अपराध

श्रीमती प्रेमा करियप्पा:††
श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज:

क्या पर्यटन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने पर्यटक स्थलों पर पर्यटकों के प्रति बढ़ते आपराधिक मामलों का संज्ञान लिया है;

(ख) क्या सरकार पर्यटकों के प्रति अपराधों की रोकथाम के लिए किसी प्रणाली की स्थापना करने पर विचार कर रही है; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है?

पर्यटन मंत्री (श्रीमती अम्बिका सोनी): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) से (ग) भारत के संविधान की सातवीं अनुसूची के अनुसार 'पब्लिक आर्डर' और 'पुलिस' राज्य के विषय हैं। इसलिए पर्यटकों के साथ अपराधों सहित, अपराध की रोकथाम की जिम्मेदारी मुख्यत: राज्य सरकारों/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों की है। मीडिया में, भारत में पर्यटकों के साथ उत्पीड़न और दुर्व्यवहार संबंधी हाल ही की रिपोर्टों के अनुसरण में, पर्यटन मंत्रालय ने अन्य मामलों के साथ, राज्यों/संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों के पर्यटन सचिवों, गृह मंत्रालय और रक्षा मंत्रालय के

†† सभा में यह प्रश्न श्रीमती प्रेमा करियप्पा द्वारा पूछा गया।

साथ, पर्यटकों की सुरक्षा और संरक्षा के मामले पर चर्चा की। इस बैठक के दौरान, राज्य और संघ राज्य क्षेत्रों में पर्यटक वार्डन के रूप में भूतपूर्व सैनिकों को तैनात करने की व्यवहार्यता पर भी चर्चा की गई। इस पर जोर दिया गया कि पर्यटकों की सुरक्षा एवं संरक्षा को सुनिश्चित करना अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है और राज्य सरकारें/संघ राज्य क्षेत्र अनिवार्य रूप से इसे सुनिश्चित करें।

Crime against tourists

*†161. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:††
SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of increasing cases of crime against tourists at tourist centres;

(b) whether Government has under its consideration a mechanism to prevent crimes against tourists; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) to (c) 'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. As such, the prevention of crime, including crimes against tourists, is the primary responsibility of State Governments/Union Territories. Following recent reports in the media regarding harassment and misbehaviour with tourists in India, the Ministry of Tourism discussed the issue of safety and security of tourists, amongst other issues, with Secretaries of Tourism of States/Union Territories. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Defence. During this meeting the feasibility of deploying the ex-servicemen as Tourist Wardens in States and Union Territories was also discussed. It was emphasised that ensuring the safety and security of tourists is of paramount importance and State Governments/Union Territories must ensure the same.

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Sir, late Jawaharlal Nehru said that tourists are our 'honoured guests'. We say, "अतिथि देवो भव।" But it is alarming to read reports in the newspapers about the increasing number of attacks on foreign tourists in the tourist-important places, especially, Rajasthan and Goa, which attract maximum tourists. Sir, both Rajasthan and Goa are increasingly becoming unsafe for the tourists and it will tarnish the image of India in the eyes of Europe, America and the rest of the world. Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any mechanism to put an end to such attacks on tourists.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would have to begin necessarily with the reply, even though I run the risk of sounding casual about it which I am not, that law and order comes under every State Government under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. But having said that we are absolutely aware of the fact that India has its great tradition of "अतिथि देवो भव", and it is enhancing the prestige and the importance of this legacy which we have.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.
††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Prema Cariappa.

Today, we can proudly say that from 2004, from 3.42 million tourists, we were able to have 5 million inbound tourists by the 31st of December, 2007. Before I answer the hon. Member's question, I would also like to say that the Finance Minister is sitting here — we have, in the year 2007, been able to contribute 12 billion US dollars to the national exchequer. We are holding and continuing to work for the goal that tourism provides the largest amount of direct and indirect employment. While the worldwise statistics is 8.3 per cent towards employment from tourism, in India, we proudly claim that direct and indirect employment flowing out of tourism is 8.9 per cent.

Having said that, Sir, we are conscious of the fact that when tourists come from different parts of the world to a country, in an open society, they can go anywhere and visit any place they would like to visit. We have been constantly writing to the State Governments, constantly emphasising over the years with the State Governments to set up a 'Special Tourism Police'. I am happy to say that ten State Governments did adhere to this suggestion of ours from the Centre and have set up a 'Tourism Police'. Some have constituted a separate Tourism Police and some have drawn out of the normal police force and other security services and constituted a 'Tourist Police Force'. It is true, especially since the last days of December 2007, till date, several incidents have come to light through the media and otherwise, where women tourists, particularly, have been harassed and exploited; and there have been rapes and there have also been security lapses. I would like to say that we had a meeting on the 24th of January. It was called for the purpose of infrastructure development, but we put the safety of inbound tourists and domestic tourists as the Item No. 1 on the agenda. The Home Ministry and the Defence Ministry were represented there. After discussing the issue with the representatives of all the States that were present, we have suggested the formation of a Tourism Task Force comprising of retired Army personnel. We know that our *jawans* and others retire somewhere at the age of 28 or 32 years; they have a certain credibility in the minds of the people: they have a sense of discipline. So, we have drawn out a structure and the blueprint of that structure has been cleared by the Ministries of Home and Defence to the extent that they have no objection to the setting up of this force. We have sent it to the State Governments with the proposal to put in place at the earliest possible opportunity. Alongside this, I am sure the hon. Members are aware that the Ministry at the Centre at regular intervals projects 'sensitisation short films' on television whereby we sensitise people like tourist guides, taxi drivers and others who come in contact with the tourists in how to behave, how to deal with the tourists in a dignified way in a manner that it behoves our concept of *'atithi devo bhavah'*. These are the four or five steps which we have taken from the Centre in addition to the advisories which are issued on a regular basis by private operators.

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Sir, the 'incredible India' campaign has been successful. If the Government does not make tourism safe, then the campaign will lose its credibility. The hon. Minister has already said that the Government will set up a special task force for tourists. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the crime rate in respect of tourists has increased or decreased over the past three years.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that we do not have any tabulated figures. But I did access some figures which have been printed and widely circulated by the Home Ministry. There was a recent World Economic Forum Report which mentioned certain figures and which we have contradicted except the figures pertaining to accidents on roads which have gone up. Comparative figures which have

been brought forward by the Ministry of Home in an official publication show that these figures have come down.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: सभापति जी, अपने लिखित उत्तर में पर्यटन मंत्री जी ने पब्लिक ऑर्डर और पुलिस को राज्य का विषय बताया है। मैं मंत्री महोदया से केवल यह कहना चाहती हूं कि हमारे यहां आने वाले पर्यटक इस अंतर को नहीं समझते हैं, उन्हें नहीं मालूम कि उनकी सुरक्षा राज्य सरकार करेगी या भारत सरकार करेगी, लेकिन हकीकत यह है कि जब किसी विदेशी पर्यटक के साथ कोई वारदात होती हैं, तो बदनामी भारत की होती है और नुकसान पर्यटन मंत्रालय का होता है। इसलिए यह जो पर्यटक वार्डन बनाने की चर्चा आपने राज्य सरकारों के साथ की थी, क्या वह चर्चा ही हुई है या उसके बाद कोई निष्कर्ष भी निकला है? क्या कोई निर्णय पर्यटक वार्डन भूतपूर्व सैनिकों का हुआ है या चर्चा के बाद बात समाप्त हो गई है?

श्रीमती अम्बिका सोनी: सभापति जी, मैं माननीय सदस्या को यह बताना चाहूंगी कि यह बात समाप्त नहीं हुई है। जैसा मैंने पहले ही कहा कि 24 जनवरी को यह बैठक आयोजित की गई थी और उसके तुरन्त बाद उस दिन जो हमारी चर्चा का आउटकम था, उसको लेकर हमने होम मिनिस्ट्री और डिफेन्स मिनिस्ट्री से क्लीयरेन्स करवाई, पूरा ब्ल्यू-प्रिंट बना है और स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स तक पहुंचाया गया है। आप भी इस बात को महसूस करेंगी कि यह टास्क-फोर्स गठित करना, स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स के लिए अपने एक्स-सर्विसमैन को और जिन लोगों को वे इसमें शामिल करना चाहें, उसमें कुछ समय लगता है। यह बैठक 24 जनवरी को हुई है और तब से आज तक ब्ल्यू-प्रिंट से लेकर स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स तक पहुंचाया गया है। इसमें और थोड़ा समय हमें स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स को जरूर देना पड़ेगा, ताकि जो भी टास्क-फोर्स गठित की जाए, उसमें ऐसे ही लोग भर्ती किए जाएं, जिन पर हमें नाज हो, जिन पर हमें विश्वास हो। यह बंद नहीं किया गया है।

DR. P.C. ALEXANDER: Sir, I am afraid the reply given by the hon. Minister may not result in the right solution for the problem that we have raised. May I invite the attention of the hon., Minister to the fact that a task force constituted by ex-servicemen will not be the same as the police force. If this problem has to be tackled effectively, there has to be a dedicated police force. Will the hon. Minister try to get from the Finance Ministry a matching contribution even to the extent of 75 per cent of the additional cost which the State Government may have to incur in creating Special Task Police Force as distinguished from the group of ex-service Personnel that you have mentioned? Sir, the problem is not just a law and order problem. It has become customary for us to listen to this elementary lesson in politics and constitutional law that subject of Law and order is a State subject. But tourism is of utmost importance to the nation as a whole because the reputation of the nation is involved and, therefore, I urge the hon. Minister to take steps for creating a dedicated task force of the police and give an assurance to us that she will move in that direction instead of depending upon ex-servicemen.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I quite agree with the hon. Member that we cannot depend on any one particular category of people to be recruited. This is normally the prerogative of the State Governments and I am not shifting either the blame or responsibility. I do fully realise that the campaign for increased tourism has been driven by the Centre with the full collaboration of the State Governments and the private sector and I am taking that share of the responsibility on us at the Centre. But this task force has been suggested in addition to the tourism police, which, I earlier mentioned, has already been set up by ten States. Some States replied that they don't have this problem and they don't need tourism police and some States are looking into the proposal now. This task force is suggested as an additional force which will man those monuments which are most visited and for some special purposes where people may require help like beaches, railway stations, bus stops, etc., where domestic and in-bound tourists do frequent. But I will take the hon. Member's suggestion and I am sure the Finance Minister, who happens to be present, can help us

because it is sometimes very difficult for States to bear additional expenditure. But I do feel that when tourism is contributing such large amounts to State and national exchequer, this additional expenditure should be borne with alacrity.

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Sir, as Prema Cariappaji said and she is feeling that Goa has become unsafe. This is the impression largely by media by blowing only one case throughout for the last four or five days. We do sympathise with the girl who was murdered on the beach of Goa. But, Sir, it is the responsibility of others also, members of the family also, to see whether young girls as small as fifteen years of age should be allowed to move freely in the midnight on the beaches of Goa. In this context, Sir, I would like to know whether the Ministry of Tourism is going to issue any advisory to tourists or would like to advise the State Government to issue any advisory to tourists.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, the hon. Member certainly has a point if he is particularly referring to the most recent incident which has been highlighted continuously over the last few days by the media. We are talking about the minor girl who, unfortunately, lost her life. People are talking of the fact that she was left alone in Goa without any other person of her family staying back with her. But I would, at this time, not go into that aspect and look at how we can strengthen our system where people even tourists could access this task force or tourism police personnel who are identified by special badges they wear or the jackets they wear. We are trying to do that. But I do agree that we need the cooperation of the media also considering the number of incidents which have happened and considering the increase in tourism. As the tourism has increased, they will be gradually sensitised, but this responsibility has to be shared by all.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I was going to ask another question, but now, considering what my hon. colleague, Mr. Naik, has said and the hon. Minister's answer, I am going to revise my question. Sir, it is extremely unfortunate that a child, who has been victimised, should now again be victimised in this House and her parents blamed for a particular type of social behaviour. And, the hon. Minister said that she agreed with the statement. I do not think that is the attitude that we can take here in the House. The fact of the matter is that the girl was on the beach; she was raped; she was killed; and, in the first report, the Government has said that it was an accident. It is for this reason that the media has very correctly highlighted this issue. Therefore, I strongly disassociate myself from this. It is really a question of once again victimising the victim. Please, don't comment on these sort of things that why the girl was on the beach at night. Are they going to send an advisory to every State Government in this country that India cannot have young people coming on their own without parental guidance and support? So, we don't accept it. My point to the Minister is that I appreciate what the hon. Minister said regarding Constitutional framework and law and order being a State subject. I fully appreciate that. But the point that I want to make specifically in this case is that since the hon Minister said, in her statement, that she is in touch regularly with the Home Ministry on such cases and on the general issue of crime against tourists, particularly against women tourists, I would request the hon. Minister that with her sensitive approach, the specific problems that women face on this case of Scarlett, her mother has asked for a CBI inquiry, would the hon. Minister lend her voice in support of that inquiry? Certainly, I believe, the House should demand from the Government a CBI inquiry into this case because, unfortunately, it seems that there is no confidence in the way in which the local police has taken up the case.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, while I agree with the hon. Member in some parts of her question or her statement, I did not agree exactly with Mr. Naik's description of responsibility being shared, which, on the one hand, has to be shared. I do not want to go into the details of this particular case because it is now under investigation, and there may or may not be an inquiry. So, I do not feel that it would be correct and proper for me to discuss various details of how a minor person is left behind or what they are doing at 1 o'clock or 4 o'clock at night, neither I am trying to victimise the girl. I do not think that the hon. Member had that intention either. It is not a fair comment. But, having said that, I would inform the hon. Member that I am regularly in touch not only with the Home Ministry, I personally call the Chief Ministers when incidents of this gravity happen in their respective States. I do believe that there is a greater sensitivity in all State Governments across the board. On issues when women have been exploited, within Short time, culprits have been picked up. They have been arrested, and they have been chargesheeted. People do want the culprits to be caught. They have been caught. There is a very strong debate regarding some of the punishments which are given for rape and other exploitations...*(Interruptions)*... people have responded very strongly to catching these culprits and there has been a demand that we want to have stronger punishments. There was recently a case where people, who had misbehaved very badly which was of concern and shame to all of us, were arrested and then they were released. There was a demand that the punishment should be made more stringent. Now, that is also for all the hon. Members to consider as to how we can make laws more stringent so that those who commit rape, the punishment should be such that it should be not be committed again. So, that is a larger question. We are looking at cases which are happening and to the extent, the Tourism Ministry can be expected to respond to law and order and security questions, I am trying to tell you what we can do within our limited powers and restrictions. I do not have powers on safety and security aspects.

Illegal constructions near Humayun Tomb

*162. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some illegal constructions have come up through nexus between Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials and local police near Humayun Tomb, Delhi;

(b) if so, whether government is considering to apply some preventive measures;

(c) whether Government has been able to unearth the nexus between officials of ASI and the local police; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps, Government proposes to take against those erring officials?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) No such report of nexus between ASI officials and local police has been received. As and when illegal/unauthorized construction is noticed or reported in the prohibited/regulated area, the Superintending Archaeologist issues notice to the offenders under Rule 38(i) of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959 for removal of unauthorized constructions. Simultaneously help from the local police as